UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council says UNOSOM II saved lives and aided peace process in Somalia, but effort was undermined by lack of cooperation from parties; supports maintenance of United Nations political mission and humanitarian activities, but says Somali people bear ultimate responsibility for peace.

+ Secretary-General has meetings with United States Secretary of State and Egyptian President in Washington, D.C.

+ Secretary-General says international community should mark first anniversary of Rwanda genocide by intensifying reconstruction and reconciliation efforts.

+ High Commissioner for Human Rights condemns ethnic killings in Burundi; calls on international community to act now to prevent repetition of Rwanda tragedy.

+ General Assembly adopts decisions on financing of UNAMIR, MINURSO and International Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia.

+ Commission on Status of Women recommends Economic and Social Council act on pending requests for accreditation of NGOs to Beijing Conference.

+ United States must ensure security of foreign missions and safety of their personnel, Cuba tells Committee on Relations with Host Country.

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The Security Council today said that the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) helped save lives and property, mitigated suffering and contributed to the search for peace. In a statement read out by its President, Karel Kovanda (Czech Republic), the Council noted that the United Nations had made significant efforts to restore peace and stability, and to facilitate the reemergence of civil society in Somalia. However, the lack of

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progress in the peace process and in national reconciliation, and the lack of cooperation from the Somali parties over security issues, undermined those efforts and prevented the continuation of UNOSOM II beyond 31 March.

The Council stressed that only a broad-based approach to political reconciliation would bring about a lasting political settlement in Somalia. The Somali people bore the ultimate responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and peace. The international community could facilitate, encourage and assist the process, but could not try to impose a solution. The Council called on the parties to pursue national reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the interest of peace, security and development.

The United Nations should not abandon Somalia, the Council said. It would continue to assist the Somali people to achieve a political settlement if they demonstrated a disposition to peaceful resolution of the conflict and cooperation with the international community. The Council welcomed the Secretary-General's intention to maintain a small political mission, should the Somali parties so wish, to assist in national reconciliation. It was also important to sustain United Nations humanitarian activities in Somalia, but that would depend on the degree of cooperation and security offered by the parties. The Council went on to say that there were important lessons to be learned about the theory and practice of peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building from the Operation in Somalia.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met today with United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Washington, D.C. A United Nations spokesman said they discussed the situation in the Middle East, including the peace process and developments in relation to the Palestinians, and the situations regarding Libya and Iraq. They also discussed the financial status of the United Nations, and Mr. Christopher expressed support for the Secretary-General's efforts with respect to administrative reform. Both expressed satisfaction regarding the recent transfer of command from the Multinational Force to the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH).

Yesterday, the Secretary-General met with President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt. They conducted a general review of the situation in the Middle East, and discussed the situation in Burundi. The Secretary-General thanked Egypt for continuing to contribute troops to United Nations peace-keeping operations.

Also in Washington, the Secretary-General addressed members of the New York Stock Exchange yesterday. He called attention to the financial plight of the United Nations, which he described as a corporation worth backing. "Everyone wants to buy into peace, security, development, human rights and democracy", he said. "The unique selling proposition is, as always, clear and simple: the United Nations is the only machinery for effective cooperation

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among all nations to mutual advantage, for peace and prosperity".

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The Secretary-General today conveyed his sympathy and condolences to the survivors of the genocide which was committed in Rwanda one year ago. "Never should the world allow such a tragedy on our planet. Never should the perpetrators of such crimes be permitted to get away with impunity", he said. The international community must recommit itself to the objective of a better world as envisaged in the United Nations Charter, and must reaffirm its faith in the dignity and worth of the human person.

The international community must intensify its efforts for reconstruction and reconciliation in Rwanda, as a fitting and enduring tribute to those who had lost their lives, the Secretary-General continued. He pledged that the United Nations would continue to support all endeavours aimed at building a new Rwandese society based on tolerance, harmony and justice.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jose Ayala Lasso, today strongly condemned recent violations of human rights in Burundi. He expressed particular concern about news of numerous ethnic killings of women and children in the countryside.

"The international community has to act now if it wants to avoid in Burundi the repetition of the tragedy of Rwanda", he said. Preventive human rights action -- including promoting respect for rights, and strengthening democracy, tolerance and the rule of law -- was indispensable. While the basic responsibility for any solution of the crisis lay with the Government and people of Burundi, the international community and the office of the High Commissioner were ready to provide the necessary assistance.

Mr. Ayala Lasso went on to say that an enhanced human rights programme, with a larger international presence in Burundi, could deter further violations. It would also help to create a climate of tolerance and mutual respect, which might in turn help to reduce the flow of refugees and facilitate their early return.

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The General Assembly today authorized the Secretary-General to commit up to $80 million gross for the operation of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) from 10 December 1994 to 9 June 1995, in addition to the $60 million gross previously authorized. It also authorized the Secretary-General to commit up to $20 million for the period 10 June to 9 July 1995, should the Security Council extend the Mission's mandate beyond 9 June. It decided, as an ad hoc arrangement, to apportion $30 million for UNAMIR for the period from 10 February to 9 April 1995, among Member States.

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The Assembly also authorized the Secretary-General to commit almost $34 million for the Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for the period 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995. That authorization included commitments of $29 million for the period 1 December 1994 to 31 May 1995 and $5 million for the period 1 to 30 June 1995. The commitment authorization was inclusive of the $6.4 million previously authorized by the Assembly and the $17 million previously authorized by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

In another action, the Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to commit an additional $1 million to allow the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia to continue its activities between 1 and 14 April. That authorization was made without prejudice to any decisions that the Assembly might take with regard to the mode of financing of the Tribunal.

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The Commission on the Status of Women today recommended that the General Assembly authorize the Economic and Social Council to decide on all pending proposals for the accreditation of non-governmental organizations to the Fourth World Conference on Women and its preparatory process. The Commission is acting as the preparatory body for the Conference, which will be held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September.

Acting by a vote of 40 in favour to none against, with 1Ñabstention (China), the Commission extended the deadline for non-governmental organizations to submit applications for accreditation to 28ÑApril. The Conference secretariat was requested to inform non-governmental organizations that had not been recommended for accreditation to the Conference and its preparatory process of the reasons for that. The organizations concerned would then be given a chance to provide additional information on their qualifications for accreditation.

The representative of China, who requested the vote on the draft, said that as the Conference's host, China welcomed the non-governmental organizations that were committed to the advancement of women. However, some countries had insisted on accreditation for a few organizations that had nothing to do with the Conference, but were trying to undermine the sovereignty of certain countries. That had disrupted the accreditation process, he said.

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The United States, as host country, should fulfil its legal obligation and ensure the security of missions and the safety of their personnel, Cuba told the Committee on Relations with the Host Country today. The Committee was meeting in response to a request by Cuba. Systematic demonstrations "carried out by terrorist organizations" disrupted the Cuban Mission's work and threatened its personnel, the Cuban representative said. As such activities were punishable under the New York state penal code and federal legislation, the United States must ensure that they ceased.

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The United States representative said his country had responded to complaints by Cuba about protests in the vicinity of its Mission. The United States Constitution allowed for freedom of expression, even if that expression was offensive. The United States Government had also maintained a 24-hour presence at the Cuban Mission. When incidences had occurred in the presence of law enforcement agencies, arrests had been made. When officers were not present, the Cuban mission had been requested to report incidents immediately and to provide evidence. However, the Mission had failed to come forward with such evidence.

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